

A
LETTER

To a FRIEND,

Concerning a

POSTSCRIPT

To the Defence of

Dr. *SHERLOCK*'s Notion

OF THE

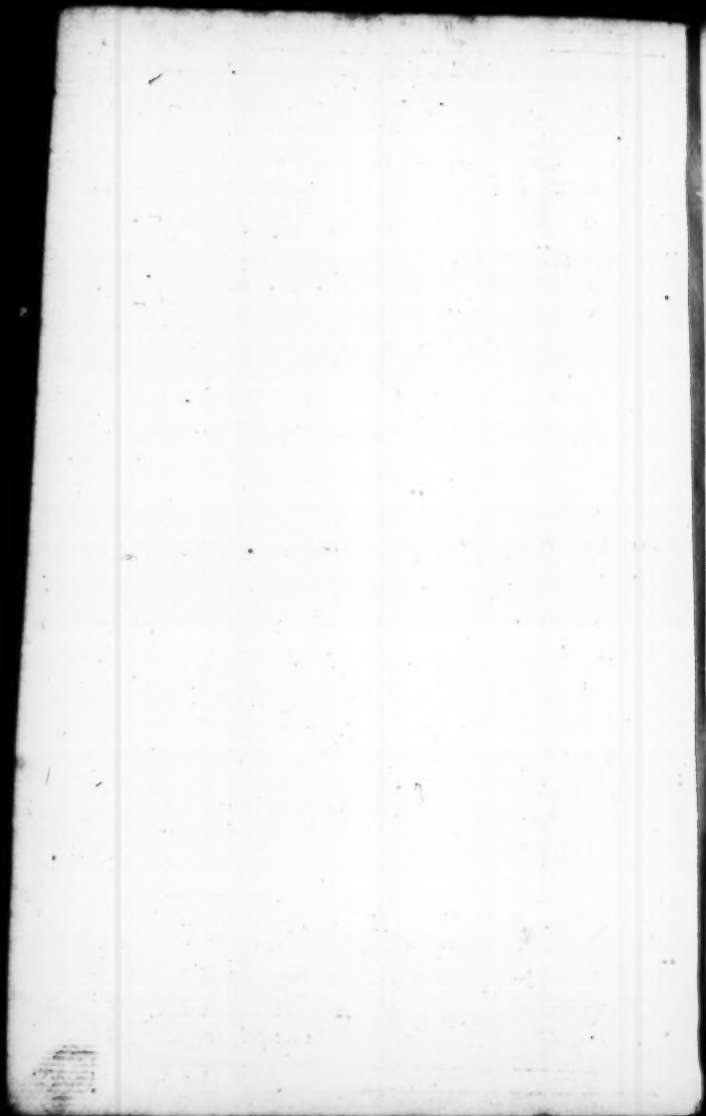
Trinity in Unity,

Relating to

The Calm and Sober Enquiry upon the
same Subject.

L O N D O N,

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A
LETTER
To a FRIEND, &c.

SIR,

I Find a *Postscript* to the newly published *Defence of Dr. Sherlock's Notion of the Trinity in Unity*, takes Notice of the *Enquiry concerning the possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead*. He that writes it seems somewhat out of Humour, or not in such as it is decent to hope is more usual with him: And I can't guess for what, unless that one, whom he imagines a Dissenter, hath ventured to cast his Eyes, that way that he did, his. But for that Imagination he may have as little ground, as I to

think the *Dean's Defender* is the *Dean*: And as little as he had to say the *Enquirer* took great Care that no Man should suspect that he favours the *Dean* in his *Notions*, where he is quite out in his guess; for the *Enquirer* took no such Care at all, but nakedly to represent his own Sentiments as they were, whether they agreed with the *Dean's*, or wherein they differ'd: And really cares not who knows that he hath not so little kindness either for the *truth* or for *him*, as to abandon or decline what he thinks to be true for his sake, or (as he express'd himself p. 29. of that Discourse) *because he said it.*

But the *Defender* represents the *Dean* as much of another temper, and that he will thank him for not favouring him in his *Notions*. But yet he says, that tho' the *Enquirer* doth not in every particular say what the *Dean* says, yet he says what will justify him against — the Charge of *Trutheism*. And is there any hurt to him in that? what

what a strange Man doth he make the Dean! as if he could not be pleas'd unless he alone did engross Truth! will he thank a Man for not favouring his Notions, and yet would blame him for not saying in every particular what he says, tho' he say what will justify him against the heaviest Charge fram'd against him! may one neither be allow'd to agree with him, nor disagree?

But Sir, the Defender's Discourse hath no design (nor I believe he himself) to disprove the Possibility of a Trinity in the ever blessed God-head. Therefore the Enquirer is safe from him as to the principal Design he is concerned for, it is all one to him if it still appear possible in what way it be so represented, that is intelligible, consistent with it self, and with other truth; so that it is hardly worth the while to him, further to enquire whether the *Dean's Hypothesis* or *his* be better, if either be found unexceptionably, safe and good.

But because the Defender hath, to give preference to the one, misrepresented both with some appearing disadvantage to the Cause it felt, what he says ought to be considered.

And the whole Matter will be reduced to this twofold Enquiry :

1. Whether the Enquirer hath said more than the Dean, or more than is defensible, *of the distinction of the Sacred Three in the Godhead.*

2. Whether the Dean hath said so much as the Enquirer, or so much as was requisite *of their Union.*

1. For the former, the Defender, p. 103. mentions the Dean's Notion of *three Infinite Minds or Spirits* : And makes the Enquirer to have been proving *three Spirits, three distinct Essences, three individual Natures, in the Godhead* ; and then adds—*for my part, I cannot take where the difference is, unless it be in the term Infinite.* 'Tis indeed strange the Enquirer shou'd have said more than the Dean,
if

if there were no difference, unless in the term *Infinite*, wherein he must have said *Infinitely* less.

But he at length, apprehends another difference, tho' he after labours to make it none, viz. that the Enquirer *disputes*, but *asserts nothing*, and he fancies he doth so to shelter himself from the *Animadverter*, of whom he says he seems to be terribly afraid — Here he puts the *Dean* into a fit of kindness and good Nature, allowing the Enquirer to partake with him in his fears, tho' not in his *Notions*, as more sacred. But he herein understands not the Enquirer, who if he had been so terribly afraid, could very easily have said nothing : And who was really afraid of a greater *Animadverter*, thinking it too great boldness, under his Eye, to speak confidently of his own *peculiarities*, and that ly folded up in so venerable darkness. He thought it enough, in opposition to the daring Person (who-soever he was) with whom he was

concern'd that so peremptorily pronounc'd the *Trinity an absurdity, a contradiction, nonsense, and an impossibility*, to represent whar he proposed as possible for ought he knew.

And now the Defender will have the Dean to have done no more. And with all my Heart let him have done no more, if he and his Animadverter, and the rest of the World will so agree it: But he will have the Enquirer to have done more, and to be much more exposed to the Charge of *Tritheism*, by asserting three distinct Essences, three individual Natures, and three spiritual Beings in the Godhead. This is indeed very marvellous, that the Enquirer should expose himself to the Charge of *Tritheism* by asserting all this, when but a few Lines before upon the same Page, he is said to have asserted nothing! But he may as well make the Enquirer in asserting nothing to have asserted all this, as the Dean in asserting all this to have asserted nothing.

And

And where the *Enquirer* hath said in express words that the *Sacred Three* are three distinct substances I can't find: And we must in great part alter the common Notion of Substance to make it affirmable of God at all, viz. that it doth *substare accidentibus*, which I believe the Dean will no more than the *Enquirer* suppose the Divine Being to admit. But 'tis true, that there is somewhat more considerable in the Notion of Substance, according whereto, if the Dean can make a shift to avoid the having of any inconvenient thing proved upon him by consequence, I hope the *Enquirer* may find a way to escape as well.

But whereas he says the Dean allows but one Divine Essence, and one individual Nature in the Godhead repeated in three Persons, but without multiplication, as he says he had already explained it. This hath occasion'd me to look back to that explanation, and if he thinks the allowing
but

but one Divine Essence, and one individual Nature in the Godhead, will agree with what the Dean hath said in his *Vindication*, I shall not envy him, nor (now) go about to disprove it. But I confess I see not how it can agree with what the *Defender* says in this his explanation it self, when p. 23. he tells us the Son is the living *subsisting Image* of the Father, and the Image and the Prototype can not be the same but must be two. No man is his own Image, nor is an Image the Image of it self. And he adds, this is so self evident, &c. But whereas the distinction all this while might be understood to be but *modal*, and that appears to be the Defenders present (what ever was the Deans former) meaning, that the three subsistences differ only in their different manner of subsisting, yet with this meaning his other words do little agree, for he plainly asserts a *real distinction* of three in the same individual numerical nature. And who did ever make a *real distinction*

distinction to be but *modal*? More expressly he had said before p. 18. the Divine Nature is *one individual nature*, but not *one single nature*, for *one single nature* can be but *one person* whether in God or man.

I shall not here discuss with him the *Criticism* upon which he lays so mighty stress of *one individual nature* and *one single nature*, but take the terms he chooses, and if the Divine Nature be not *one single nature*, it must be double, it must be triple. And what doth this come to less than three Natures? unless all ordinary forms of speech must be quite abandon'd and forsaken. And wherein doth it come short of what is said by the Enquirer? p. 50. and 51.
 "This term *individual* must (in the case
 "now supposed, *as possible not as certain*)
 "admit of a twofold application either
 "to the distinct essence of the *Father*,
 "or of the *Son*, or of the *Holy Ghost*;
 "or to the entire essence of the *Godhead*,
 "in

“in which these three do concurr. *Each*
 “of these *conceived by it self*, are (accor-
 “ding to this supposition) individual
 “essences, but *conceived together* they are the
 “entire individual essence of God, for there
 “is but one such essence and no more, and
 “it can never be multiplied nor divided
 “into more of the same name and na-
 “ture”. *Duplicity, triplicity*, are admitted ;
simplicity rejected, if (simple and sin-
 gle be of the same signification.) Where
 is the difference, but that the one thinks
absolute omnimodous simplicity is not to be
 affirmed of the Divine Nature, as he of-
 ten speaks. The other says downright,
it is not single or simple without limitation.
 The one denies multiplication of it, so
 doth the other : The one indeed *speaks*
positively, the other doth but *suppose*
 what he says as *possible not certain.* And
 there is indeed some difference between
 supposing a thing as possible for ought
 one knows; and affirming it *so positive-*
ly, as to impute *Heresie*, and *Nonsense*
 to

to all Gainfayers. But both bring for proof, the same thing, *The incarnation*; as in the *Postscript*, the *Defender* takes notice the *Enquirer* doth. p. 102. And so doth he himself in his letter, p. 102.

— *The Divine Nature was incarnate in Christ, he was perfect God and perfect man, and if there was but one single Divine Nature in all three persons, this one single Divine Nature was incarnate, and therefore the Father and the Holy Ghost who are this single Divine Nature as well as the Son, must be as much incarnate as the Son was. He makes the contrary absurd. And brings in (fitly enough) Victorinus After teaching, that we ought not to say, nor is it lawful to say, that there is but one substance (i. e. as he paraphrases it, one single subsisting nature (therefore there must be three single subsisting natures) and three persons. For if this same substance did and suffer'd all (Patri-passiani et nos) we must be Patri-passians, which God forbid.*

And what the *Defender* alledges from
the

the *Ancients*, against the *Sabellians*, allowing only a *Trinity of Names* and his taking the *τρεῖς ὑπάρχουσιν*, in the *concrete* not in the

abstract, fully enough speaks the *Enquirers* sense, his accounting the contrary too *Fine* and *Metaphysical* for him was what was writ to Dr. Wallis, *Calm Discourse*, p. 107. *too fine or too little solid*, &c.

In short, till it can be effectually prov'd, that *Mind* and *Spirit* do not signify somewhat as absolute as *Nature* or *Essence* (or rather more than the former, which signifies the *Principle of Operation* as the other of *Being*,) And till it can be as well prov'd, that asserting a thing as certain, so as to pronounce it *Here* and *Nonsense* to think otherwise, is less than only to propole it as possible, or enquire whether it be so or no, The Dean must be judg'd by every one that understands common sense, to have heightened the *Distinction* of three
Per-

Persons at least as much as the *Enquirer*. And whether the *Enquirer* have supposed more than is defensible against the Defenders objections, will be considered by and by in its proper place. In the mean time let it

2. Be examin'd whether the Dean has said as much for *salving the Unity of the Godhead* as the *Enquirer*, or as much as is requisite to that purpose. And here our Business will be short, for it all turns upon that one single point, whether *mutual Consciousness* be that Union which must be acknowledged, or *suppose* it only. For which we need only appeal to common Reason, whether *Being* do not in the natural Order precede even the *Power of working*, and consequently whether *being united vitally*, precede not the *possibility of acting agreeably to that united state*, whereupon the Enquiry is not concerning *actual conscience* only, but (as he speaks) *Consciousness*. Is it possible any three Persons or Intelligent

ligent Subsistences, should naturally have vital Perception of each others internal Motions and Sensations, without being vitally preunited? I say *naturally*, for that God might give to three created Spirits a *temporary Perception* of each other without bringing them into a *stated Union* each with other, is little to be doubted; as a Spirit may assume a Body and animate it *pro tempore* without being substantially united with it. And if that Body were also a Spirit they might *pro tempore* for ought we know by extraordinary Divine Disposition (for within the ordinary course of Nature we know of no such intimacy of created Spirits to another) be *quasi animæ* to one another. But if naturally they were so to mingle and transfuse Sensations mutually into each other, they must be naturally, *first*, in vital union with one another. Nor therefore did the *Enquirer* mistake the *Dean's* Notion as the *Defender* fancies in the passage he quotes p. 104. as if
 he

he took mutual Consciousness for meer mutual Perspection. For tho' *scire* abstractly taken doth not signifie more than *perspicere*, yet the Enquirer in that passage speaking of a *never so perfect mutual perspection* properly enough express'd thereby as great a feeling such Spirits were supposed to have of each other, in themselves, as *mutual consciousness* is apt to signifie, or as the Dean can yet be supposed to have meant, that perspection being more perfect which produces gusts and relishes suitable to the Object, than that which stays in meer speculation only.

And upon the whole, it seems very strange the Defender should say, if *such an internal, vital sensation, be not an essential union*, he believes no man can tell what it is. For how can such *actual sensation* be imagin'd to be *union*? As well might the use of sense its self (speaking of any thing singly to which it belongs) be said to be its *constituent form*, or (consequently,

quently) the doing any thing that proceeds from Reason, be the form of a Man. So *the writing a Book*, should be *the Author*. And whereas he says it is certain the Dean took it to be so, and therefore he did not leave out a natural external union; it follows, indeed, that he did not leave it out, in his Mind, and Design, but he nevertheless left it out of his Book, and therefore said not enough there, to salve the unity of the Godhead, but ought to have insisted upon somewhat prior to mutual consciousness, as constituent of that unity, and which might make the three one, and not meerly argue them to be so.

2. But now p. 105. he comes to find as great fault with the Enquirers way of maintaining this unity, and because he is resolv'd to dislike it, if he can't find it faulty, sets himself to make it so.

The Temper of Mind wherewith he writes to this purpose what follows p. 105. and onwards to the end so soon,
and

and so constantly shews it self, that no man whose mind is not in the same disorder will upon Tryal apprehend any thing in it, but such heat as dwells in darkness. And he himself hath given the Document which may be a measure to any apprehensive Reader.

True divine Wisdom rests not on an ill natur'd, and perverse Spirit, I understand it, while the ill fit lasts. But 'tis strange he could write those words without any self-reflection.

See his Letter,
p. 1.

The Thing to be reveng'd is, that the Enquirer did freely speak his Thoughts, wherein he judg'd the Dean's *Hypothesis* defective, his not taking notice of what he reckon'd *naturally antecedent* and *fundamental* to *mutual consciousness*: A most intimate, natural, necessary, eternal union of the sacred Three. If the Enquirer spake sincerely, as he understood the matter; and him; and it evidently appear the *Defender* did not so, I only say the wrong'd person hath

much the advantage and wishes him no other harm, than such gentle Regrets, as are necessary to set him right with himself, and his higher Judge.

He says, *he (the Enquirer) represents this (Unity) by the union of soul and body, and by the union of the divine and humane nature, &c.*

'Tis true, he partly doth so, but more fully by the (supposed union of) *three created Spirits* (to which he that will may see, he only makes that a lower step) and he says, (with respect especially to the former of these) " That
 " an union supposeable to be originally,
 " eternally, and by natural necessity in
 " the most *perfect being*, is to be thought
 " unexpressibly *more perfect* than any o-
 " ther. But (he adds) these are *personal unions*, and therefore cannot be the *unity of the Godhead*. And he very well knew (for he had but little before cited the passage) that the Enquirer never intended them so, but only to represent
 that

that the union of the *three* in the *God-head*, could not be reasonably thought *less possible*.

What he farther adds is much stranger (and yet herein I am resolv'd to put *Charity* towards him to the utmost stretch, as he professes to have done his *understanding*) for he says — *as far as he can possibly understand* and that *he should be glad to be better informed*, tho' there is some reason to apprehend that former displeasure darkned his understanding, (and even dimn'd his Eye-sight) which yet I hope hath it's more lucid Intervals, and that his distemper is not a fixed habit with him.) And what is it now that he cannot possibly understand otherwise? that no other union will satisfy him (*viz.* the Enquirer) but such an union of three spiritual Beings and individual natures as by their composition constitute the Godhead, as the composition of soul and body do the Man, *i.e.* He cannot understand but he means what he expressly denies.

Who can help so cross an understanding? If he had not had his

Calm Discourse
p. 34.

very finger upon the place where the Enquirer says in express words [I peremptorily deny all composition in the Being of God]

Calm Discourse
p. 89, 90.

this had been more excusable, (besides much said to the same purpose elsewhere)

It had been *ingenuous* in any man not to impute that to another, as *his meaning*, which in the plainest terms he disavows, as none of his meaning: And it had been *prudent* in the *Dean* (or his *Defender*) of all Mankind not to have done so in the present case, as will further be seen in due time. But he takes it for an Affront, when he fancies a man to come too near him.

He adds, for this reason he disputes earnestly against the universal absolute omnimodous simplicity of the divine Nature, and will not allow that Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, are the same thing in God, and
distin.

distinguished into different Conceptions by us, only through the weakness of our understandings, which cannot comprehend an infinite Being in one thought, and therefore must, as well as we can, contemplate him by parts.

I know not what he means by earnestly, the matter was weighty, and it is true, he was in writing about it in no disposition to jeast. But it's said *he disputed against the universal, absolute, omnimodous simplicity of the Divine Nature*. I hope the *Defender* in this means honestly, but he speaks very improperly, for it supposes him to think that the universal, absolute, omnimodous simplicity, so earnestly disputed against, did really belong to the Divine Nature, but I can scarce believe him to think so, and therefore he should have said, his disputation tended to prove it not to belong. If *he* (*viz.* the *Defender*, or the *Dean*) did really think it did, *they*, or *he*, must be very singular in that sentiment. I would have them name me the man

that ever laid down and asserted such a position. Some I know have said of that Sacred Being, that it is *summè simplex*, or more simple than any thing else, but that imports not universal, absolute, omnimodous simplicity, which is impossible to be a perfection, or therefore to belong to the Divine Nature. No man that ever acknowledged a Trinity of persons even modally distinguished, could ever pretend it, for such simplicity excludes *all modes*. Nay, the *Antitrinitarians* them-

selves can never be for it, as the F. 139. *Calm Discourse* hath shewn. And if the Dean be, he is gone into the remotest extream from what he held (and plainly enough seems still to hold) that ever man of sense did.

But for what is added, that he *will not allow that Wisdom, Power and Goodness, are the same thing in God* : This is not fairly said, Civility allows me not to say, *untruly*. There is no word in the place

place he cites, nor any where in that book, that signifies *not allowing*, 'tis intimated we are not instructed "by the "Scripture to conceive of the Divine Nature, as, in every respect, *most absolutely simple*, or that Power, Wisdom, Goodness in the abstract, are the same thing, and that our difficulty is great to apprehend them really undistinguishable. And let me seriously ask himself, doth he in good earnest think it is only through the weakness of our understandings that we distinguish the notions of the Divine *Wisdom, Power and Goodness*? certainly it were great weakness of understanding to define them alike. I believe he never met with the writer yet that distinguisht them less, than *ratione ratiocinatâ*, in contradistinction to *ratocinante*, which implies somewhat corresponding to our distinct notions of them (eminently and not formally) *in naturâ rei*.

And whereas he further says, This prepared his way to make Goodness, Wis-

Wisdom, Power, — a natural Trinity in Unity, herein the Defender is mistaken. This is not the *Trinity* which the Enquirers discourse was ever intended to terminate in, as he himself hath expressly said, and the Defender takes notice of it, which makes me wonder how he could think it was so intended, citing the very passage p. 37. *Calm Disc.* where the Enquirer “ professes, not to judge, that we are under “ the precise notions of *Power, Wisdom* “ and *Goodness*, to conceive of the Father, “ Son and Holy Ghost. But why then were these three so much discours’d of before? They are three most celebrated Divine Attributes, wherein we have our most immediate and very principal concern. And some have thought the Trinity was most fitly to be conceived by them: The Enquirer did not think so; but he thought *first*, it would be requisite to have our minds *disentangled from any apprehended necessity* of conceiving

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ing them to be in all respects *the very same things*, nor are they *the very same*, if they be so distinguish'd as is expressed in the 16th. of the

Calm. Disc.
p. 140.

summary propositions; where also they are *each of them* said to be common to *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, whence therefore it is impossible they shou'd be thought to distinguish *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. But that some distinction being admitted even *of them*, this might facilitate to us our conception of the *greater distinction* which must be, of *Father, Son and Spirit*, as is express'd p. 38. Indeed he did not think fit to interrupt his discourse by staying to shew reasons why he did not rest in that account alone of the Trinity, tho' it might seem plausible, or not absurd, but proceeded further to what was more satisfying to himself, and might be so to other men. And (as the intervening *Series* of his discourse leads thereto) this is more directly done p. 47. & 48. &c. especially where

where he comes to speak of the *necessary coexistence*, and the (as necessary and natural) order of the *Father, Son and Spirit*, towards each other. The *second* being, not by any intervening act of will, but by necessary, eternal *promanation*, from the first, and the *third* from them both. And the true reason why *Power, Wisdom and Goodness*, were not thought expressive of the distinction of Father, Son and Spirit, but common to each of them (as is said, *Summary Prop. 16.*) was, that the two latter can not but be *necessary emanations*, most connatural to their *Original*, as is truly suggested by the *Defender*, p. 111.

If you object (as the *Defender* brings in the *Enquirer*, saying) That this gives us the notion of a compounded Deity, &c. This, *i.e.* the supposition, that *absolute omnimodous simplicity*, belongs not to it, is the thing which may be thought to give us this notion. And he tells us, he (the *Enquirer*) answers this difficulty, by giving us

a new notion of a *compositum*. And what's that which he calls a new notion? that a *compositum* seems to imply a preexisting component, that brings such things together, and supposes such and such more simple things to have preexisted apart, or separate, and to be brought afterwards together into an united State.

And indeed is this a new notion? as new as the Creation? Let him shew me an Instance through the whole created universe of Beings (And for the uncreated Being the *Defender* (now at this time) disputes against any composition there, and the *Enquirer* denies any) first, where there hath been a *compositum* without a pre-existing component, or next the compounded parts whereof, if substantial did not in order of nature pre-exist separate; i. e. whether *esse simpliciter* do not naturally precede *esse tale*, or which is all one, to our present purpose, whether they were not capable hereof if the Creator pleased: Let any
man

man, I say, tell me where was there ever a *compositum* made by substantial union, that did not consist of once separate or of separable parts.

But note his admirable following supposition, *that is to say, that if a man, suppose, who consists of body and soul, had been from eternity, without a maker, and his soul, and body had never subsisted a part, he could not have been said to have been a compounded Creature?* This is said with design most groundlessly (as we shall see) to fasten an absurd consequence upon the Enquirer, and see how it lucks: Did ever any man undertake to reprove an absurdity with greater absurdity? a Creature without a Maker! what sort of Creature must this be! we have a pretty saying quoted in the Defender's Letter; *He that writes lies down*; and we are apt enough too, when we write *to trip and fall down*, and ought in such Cases to be merciful to one another, even tho' he that falls should be
in

in no danger of hurting his fore-head, much more if he be. What was another man's turn now, may be mine next.

But let the supposition proceed, and put we *Being* instead of *Creature*, which no doubt was the Defender's meaning, for *Creature* he must needs know it could not be that had no Maker. And what then ? *why he should not (says he) have been said to be compounded, though he would have had the same parts that he has now :* We have here a self-confounding supposition, which having done that first, can't hurt him whom it was designed to confound, being taken in season. Grant one, and you grant a thousand. A *Being* made up of a soul and a body, is so imperfect an entity, as could not be of it self. *Nothing is of it self which is not absolutely perfect.* If he mind to disprove this, let him try his faculty when he pleases against it, and (which I sincerely believe he never intends) together with it, against all Religion. But besides

sides, he hath destroy'd his own supposition himself (to put us out of that danger) by saying in plain words, p. 107. *We have no Notion of an eternal and necessary Existence, but in an absolutely perfect and infinite nature.* Now say I, what is so perfect, and hath whatever belongs to it necessarily, though distinguishable things belong to it, hath no *parts*, for what are *parts*, but such things as can be parted ? such things as never were parted, and never can be, (as 'tis nonsense to talk of those things being parted that are *united necessarily*, and of themselves) are no parts, if *partiri*, whence they are so called, must not (and herein he cannot so fool the whole Christian World as to make it concur with him) lose its signification to serve a turn. Tho' the *things* be *real*, there partibility is not real. If any indeed will call them *parts*, because they may be conceived or contemplated apart, as *parts meerly conceptible* are no prejudice to the perfection of the Divine Being, so are
such

such *conceivable parts* acknowledged by this Author himself in express words; *we cannot comprehend an* His Letter, p. 105. *infinite Being in one Thought, and therefore must as well as we can contemplate him by parts.* God can as little admit to be a part of any thing, as to have any thing a part of him. And yet 'tis no prejudice to the Dignity and Perfection of his *Being*, to conceive of him conjunctly with other things, as when we make him a *part* (*subject or predicate*) of a Proposition. All his disputation therefore against *parts* and *composition* in the *Deity*, is against a figment, or no present adversary. For my part I am of his mind, and I should be obliged to thank him that this once he vouchsafes to let me be on his side, when he knows I am, if he did not take so vast pains to make others not know it. How hard a thing is it for an angry man (especially when he knows not why) to write with a sincere Mind.

But hath he in all this fervent bluster a present concern *at this time* for the Honour of the Divine Being? (as God forbid I should think he never hath) what is that he supposes injurious to it? Is it *the words, parts and compounds*? or is it *the things* supposed to be united in the Divine Being? *The words* he knows to be his own, and let him dispose of them more ineptly if he can tell how: *parts* that were never put together, never parted, nor ever shall be the one or other; *i. e.* that never were or will be *parts*: And a *compound* of such parts! But now for the things upon which he would obtrude these words [*three Essences, natures, (or if you please, Infinite minds or spirits)* signified by the Names of *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, in eternal union, but distinct in the Being of God.] Let us consider his disputation against them *united, or in union*, according to its double aspect: First, upon the *Hypothesis* or Supposition

on

on of them : Secondly, *upon himself.*

First, Consider his Disputation as le-
vell'd against the Hypothesis or supposi-
tion of such distinct essences, natures,
minds, spirits, in necessary, eternal Union
in the Divine Being. And one of his
arguments against it, is in thole words of
his *One principal argument against it* (here
put out *parts and composition* which are
his own, and we have no more to do
with them) is, that God is eternal and
unmade, and whatsoever (*bath parts*, saies
he) hath such essences in it, must have
a maker. And here let him prove his
consequence, and his businels is done,
viz. both ways, as will be seen by and
by. But let him shew the inconsisten-
cy between a things having such di-
stinct essences naturally and necessari-
ly united in it, (as the supposition to
be argued against is, and before ought
to have been justly stated) and it's be-
ing eternal and unmade. But how that
is to be evinced I can not so much as

guess; confident affirmation, against the most obvious Tenour of Gods own Word, is of little account, who shall ascend into the heavens? or fathom the depths? or can have that perspection of God's incomprehensible nature, as without (and visibly against) his own revelation to be able, without great rashness, to pronounce so concerning him? But so toyish an *Argument* as here follows, is worse than the *Position*; i. e. when one shall say, that *for ought we know there may be three distinct Essences by an eternal unmade union, united into one, in the Being of God*; any man should say, and be so vain as to expect to be regarded, that because they are united by an eternal and unmade union, therefore they are not united by an eternal and unmade union! If there be not a Contradiction in the terms to disprove a thing, by it self, is to say nothing, or is all one with proving a thing by it self. He proceeds, to what
hath

hath no thing in it like an Argument, but against *his own Conceit of parts*, and that very trifling too. *There can be but one eternal nature in God : But if there be three — there must be three.* This 'tis now come to, proving his Point by its self. Here he makes sure work to have nothing deny'd, but then nothing is prov'd, no advance is made; if there be three, there must be three. But if there be three what ? eternal *parts* : There must be three different Natures, or else they — — would be the same. (What ? tho' distinct ?) But this supposes some body said the first : And who ? himself ; therefore he is disproving himself. If I had said so, I would have deny'd his consequence, for there may be similar parts : Whereas by different, he seems to mean dissimilar. *He says not only distinct, but different natures.* Now you have that wonderful thing talk'd of some times, but never brought to view before, a *distin-*

Elion without a *difference*. 'Tis strange how any things should be distinct, and no way different. What distinguishes them if they differ by nothing. This *different*, apply'd to this present Case, is *his own word*, coined to introduce a Notion that is not new to Christians only, but to all Man-kind. If by different Natures he means (as he seems) of a *different kind*, who thought of such a difference? But I trow, things that *differ in number*, do as truly differ (however essentially cohæring) tho' not so widely.

His next is, *that though we have a natural notion of an eternal Being, we have no notion of three eternal Essences* (which again I put instead of *his parts*) *which necessarily coexist in an eternal union.*

Doth he mean we are to disbelieve every thing of God whereof we have not a natural Notion? Then to what purpose is a Divine Revelation? Is this Notion of God pretended to be Natural?

ral? 'Tis enough, if such a Notion be most favoured by his own Revelation, who best understands his own Nature, and there be no evident natural Notion against it. He forgot that he had said, (*Defence*, p. 5.) *If every thing which we have no positive Idea of must be allow'd to contradict Reason, we shall find contradictions enow ; adding, We must confess a great many things to be true, which we have no Idea of, &c.* He adds, once more we have no notion of an eternal and necessary existence, but in an absolutely perfect and infinite nature, but if there be (I here again leave out his three parts, because I design to consider if there be any thing of strength brought against what was supposed possible by the Enquirer, not against his fiction, which I trouble not my self any further with) three spiritual Beings — neither of them can be absolutely perfect and infinite, (I would rather have said none, or no one, than neither, since the discourse is of more than two. I thought

the meaning of *uter* and *neuter* had been agreed long ago,) *tho'* we could suppose their union to make such a perfect Being, because they are not the same, and (neither) no one of them is the whole, — &c.

This is the only thing that ever came under my notice among the *School-men*, that hath any appearing strength in it, against the *Hypothesis* which I have proposed as possible for ought I knew. They generally dispute against many sorts of Compositions in the Being of God, which I am not concern'd in. That of *Matter* and *Form*, which is alien from this affair, of *quantitative parts*, which is as alien. Of *subject* and *accident*, which touches us not. Of *act* and *power*, which doth it as little. Each subsistent, being eternally in utmost actuality. And by sundry sorts and methods of argument, whereof only *this* can seem to signify any thing against the present supposition. And it wholly resolves into the Notion of *Infinity*, about which I generally spoke

spoke my sense in that *first Letter* to Dr. Wallis. And as I there intimated how much easier it is to *puzzle another* upon that subject *than to satisfy one self*, so I here say, that I doubt not to give any man as much trouble about it in respect of *quantitative extension*, as he can me, *in this*. I think it demonstrable that one Infinite can never be from another by *voluntary production*, that it cannot by *necessary Emanation*, I think not so. In the mean time when we are told so plainly by the Divine Oracles, of a *sacred three*, that are each of them God, and of some one whereof some things are spoken that are not nor can be of the others. I think it easier to *count three* than to *determine of Infiniteness*: And accordingly to form ones Belief. But of this more when we come to compare him with himself. And for what he discourses of the aspect this supposition hath upon the *Trinity*, and the *Homo-ousion*. It all

See Calm
Disc. p.
122. 123

p. 108. 109,
110.

all proceeds still upon his own *fiction of parts*, and upon the invidious straining of that similitude of the union of soul and body, as he himself doth *tantum non* confess; except that he lessens it by saying most untruly that he (the Enquirer) doth expressly own the Consequence. Therefore if he do not own the Consequence, then the Defender confesses himself to have invidiously devised it; and what is it? That if all three by this composition are but one God, *neither* of them by himself is true and perfect God. The *Divinity* is like the *English*. But both his own. The *Enquirer* denies both antecedent (which he knows) and consequent too. Leave out *by this composition*, (his own figment) and his argument as much disproves any Trinity at all as it doth the present *Hypothesis*.

But wherein doth the Enquirer own it? because such a Similitude is used (as 'tis often in that discourse) of the union between soul and body (declared
else-

elsewhere to be unexpressibly defective) that therefore the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, are each of them by himself no more truly *Lord* or *God*, according to the *Athanasian Creed*, or otherwise than in as improper a sense, as the Body of a Man, excluding the Soul, is a Man, or an Humane Person. Or as if Deity were no more in one of the Persons, than humanity in a Carcass! who that looks upon all this with equal Eyes, but will rather choose as doubtful a notion, than so apparently ill a Spirit! Are similitudes ever wont to be alike throughout, to what they are brought to illustrate? It might as well be said, because he mentions with Approbation such as illustrate the Doctrine of the Trinity by a Tree and its Branches, that, therefore, there we are to expect Leaves and Blossoms. Is it strange the Created Universe should not afford us an exact Representation of uncreated Being? How could he but think of that;

To whom do ye liken me? At least one would have thought he should not have forgot what he had so lately said himself. *We must grant we have no perfect Example of any such union in nature.*

His Letter. P. 5. What Appetite in him is it, that

now seeks what Nature doth not afford? A very unnatural One, we may conclude. 'Twere trifling to repeat what was said, and was so plain, before, that the union between Soul and Body was never brought to illustrate *personal union* but *essential*. The former is here imagin'd without pretence, there being no mention or occasion for the the mentioning of *Persons* in the

Calm Disc. 47. place he alledges. But to make out his violent Consequence he foists in a supposition, that never came into any man's Imagination but a *Socinians* and *his own*. (Which I say, contradistinguishing him to them, that the matter may (as it ought) appear the more

His Letter
P. 110.

strange.) *If God be a person, he can be*

be but one. Is God the appropriate Name of a Person ? then indeed there will be but *one person* ; but who here says so but himself ? The name God is the name of the Essence, not the distinguishing name of a Person. But if three intelligent Natures be united in one Deity, each will be Persons, and each will be God, and all will be one God ; not by parts, other than conceivable, undivided, and inseparable, as the Soul and Body of a Man are not. Which sufficiently conserves the Christian Trinity from such furious and impotent Attacks as these. And the *Homoousiotes* is most entirely conserved too. For what are three spiritual natures no more the same, than (as he grossly speaks) the Soul and Body are ? no more than an intelligent mind, and a piece of Clay ? by what consequence is this said, from any thing in the Enquirers *Hypothesis* ? Whereas also he expressly insists, that the

Calm Disc. p.
48.

the:

the Son of the Father, the Holy Ghost from both. Is not the water in the streams, the same that was in the Fountain? and are not the several Attributes expressly spoken of as common to

Calm Disc. p.
140.

these three? Essential Power, Wisdom, Goodness, (which are deny'd to be the precise notions of Father, Son, and Spirit) said by more than a *μετ' ὅλων*, as that may be understood to signify, meer presence, (how intimate soever) but by real, vital union, as much each one's as any one's? and all other conceivable perfections besides?

Why were these words read with Eyes refusing their office, to let them into the Reader's mind? whence also

Postscr. to his
Letter p. 111.

how fabulous is the Talk of Powers begetting Wisdom, &c. against what is so plainly said of the order of Priority and Posteriority, &c.

Calm Disc. p.
48.

There had been some *prudence* seen in all this conduct, if the *Defender* could have taken effectual care, that every thing should

should have been blotted out of all the
 Copies of that Discourse, but what *he*
 would have thought fit to be permitted
 to the view of other Eyes than his own.
 For then, tho' in so gross prævarication
 he had not preserved *his Innocency*, he
 might have sav'd in some degree *his Re-*
putation. Yet also he should have taken
 some heed that Anger might not so have
 discoloured his Eye, as to make so in-
 judicious a Choice what to confess and
 what to conceal. For had he not him-
 self blab'd, that it was said, we are
 not under the *precise notions* of *Power*, *Wis-*
dom and *Goodness*, to conceive of the
Father, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*. He might
 more plausibly have formed his odd
 Births, and father'd them where he doth.
 But wrath indulg'd will show its go-
 verning power. And all this fury and
vengeance (upon the Enquirer, and the Dean
 too) he reckon'd was due, only because
 it was so presumptuously thought, that
 somewhat in *his Hypothesis* (or which
 he

he defends) might have been better; and that he (probably) sees it might, so much a greater thing (in some ill fits) is *the gratifying a humour* than the *Christian Cause!*

2. But let us now see how all this turns upon himself. And how directly his ill-polisht (not to say envenom'd) darts, missing their designed Mark, strike into that very Breast which he undertakes to defend.

Whereas there are two things, principally to be designed in a Discourse of this subject. *viz.*

1. The explaining the Unity of the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, so as that tho' they are some way *three*, they may yet be concluded to be in *Godhead but one*.

2. The evincing notwithstanding *that unity*, the possibility of their sufficient distinction, to admit the distinct predicates that are severally spoken of them in the Holy Scriptures.

The Enquirer's discourse chiefly insists upon these two things.

1. That necessity of Existence is the most fundamental Attribute of Deity. And that therefore the *Father*, as the *Fountain*, being necessarily of himself: The *Son*, necessarily of the *Father*: The *Holy Ghost*, necessarily from them both, each cannot but be God, and the same, *one God*. (In reference to the former purpose.)

2. That *absolute omnimodous simplicity*, being never asserted, in Scripture, of the divine Being, nor capable of being, otherwise, demonstrated of it, and it being impossible, either from Scripture, or rational evidence, accurately to assign the limits thereof, and determine what simplicity belongs to that ever-blessed Being, and what not. If it be necessary to our apprehending how such distinct predicates and attributions may severally belong, to the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, that we conceive three distinct essences necessarily coexisting, in an eternal,
D vital,

vital, inseperable union in the Divine Being. The thing *may be in it self possible for ought we know.* (And this is propounded to serve the latter purpose)

The *Defender of the Dean* seems to think otherwise of these two things, viz. Of necessity of Existence, common to the sacred three, which will prove each of them to be God, and, belonging to them in the mentioned order, as *Father, Son, and Spirit*, will prove them, necessarily, to be *one God*.

And of what is said of *simplicity*, which might admit their sufficient distinction; of both these, I say, he seems to think otherwise by neglecting both, lest that Discourse should be thought any way pertinent, or useful to its end. And disputes vehemently against the latter, *How strongly and successfully*, he does it, *in respect of the Truth of the Thing*, we have seen.

But whether *weakly or strongly*, that his *disputation tends to wound the Dean's cause*

cause, all that it can, shall now be made appear.

It is notorious the Dean hath asserted, so positively, *three infinite Minds or Spirits*, that the *benign interpretation* wherewith *this Defender* would salve the matter, (*A new Vocabulary* being to be made for him on purpose, and the Reason of things quite alter'd) will to any man of sense seem rather ludicrous, than sufficient, without express retractation. For which the *Enquirer* thinks he is upon somewhat better Terms, than he; if there were occasion for it, both by the Tenour of his whole Discourse, and by what he hath particularly said in the 28 *Seet.* But Calm Disc. p. 73
74. after the Interpretation offer'd, See whether such things are not said over and over in the *Defence*, as make the Defender (and the Dean if he speak his sense) most obnoxious to the whole argumentation in the *Postscript.* So as, if a part was acted, it was carried so

untowardly, that it seem'd to be quite forgotten *what part* it was, and all the Blows (for it was come now to *offending* instead of *Defending*) fall directly upon him, whom the Actor had undertaken to defend.

It hath been noted already, that the Defender says expressly, the *Divide Nature* is *one individual nature*, (and so says the *Enquirer*) — but *not one single nature*; (then it must be *double and triple*, not absolutely simple, as also the *Enquirer* says) to which he (*viz.* the Defender) adds, *one single nature can be but one person, whether in God or Man.* Now let any man judge whether all his Reasonings are not most directly applicable against him, (if they signify any thing) which are contained in his Postscript, p. 106, 107, 108. &c.

How furiously doth he ex-
 agitate that saying, *When you præ-
 dicate Godhead, or the Name of God,*
 of

Defence p. 16.
 p. 18.

Calm Disc. p.
 50. 51.

Postscrip.] p.
 108, 109.

of any one of them, (viz. Father, Son, or Holy Ghost) you herein express a true but inadequate conception of God, &c. insisting that the whole undivided Divine Nature (no doubt it is everlastingly undivided wherever it is) subsists entirely, in three distinct Persons : This the Enquirer never deny'd, tho' he charges it upon him, that he makes no one of the Persons to be true and perfect God. But how well doth that agree with what he had himself said, (Defence, p. 26.) Tho' God be the most absolute, compleat, independent Being, yet neither the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, can be said to be, an absolute, compleat, independent God. He falsely charges it upon the Enquirer that he makes the Persons severally not perfect God, and he denies two of them to be compleat God. To say not perfect, is criminal (as indeed it is) to say not compleat is innocent ! But his saying the Son and Holy Ghost are not compleat God ; How doth

Postscrip.
p. 108.

it consist with what is said, *Postscr.* p. 109. *The same whole entire Divinity distinctly and inseparably subsists in the Person of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.* What is wanting to make him compleat God, in whom the whole, entire Divinity subsists? No wonder if he quarrel with all the World who so little agrees with him, whose Defence he undertakes, or with himself. In the mean time the Enquirer hath the less reason to complain, when he manifestly treats himself as ill as him.

I only add, that for his Discourse concerning [the one Divinity, or one Divine Nature, subsisting wholly and entirely, three times, (whereas I had thought the three Persons had subsisted at all times, and all at once) *Defence* p. 26, &c. And the Persons of the Son and Holy Spirit, not being emanations, p. 28. Not the Son, because he is the Father's Image: And an Image is not an emanation, but a reflection: (But how should there be a

re-

reflected Image without an emanation?) Nor the *Holy Ghost* being *πνεῦμα*, not in the sense of *emanation*, but of the *mysterious Proceſſion*] I ſhall make no gueſſes about it (for it concerns not the *Enquirer*) only I think it very ſecure againſt the *formidable Objection* which he mentions p. 35. of it's being too *intelligible*.

Upon the whole matter I ſee not what ſervice it can do him, to put *intelligent perſon* inſtead of *mind*. For I thought every *Perſon* had been intelligent. *Boethius* his definition which he alledges plainly implies ſo much, and one would think he muſt know that it is the *uſual notion of Perſon* to underſtand by it *ſuppoſitum rationale* or *intelligents*. Therefore methinks he ſhould not reckon it neceſſary to diſtinguiſh *Perſons* (as he doth by this addition of intelligent) into ſuch as are *Perſons* and ſuch as are *no Perſons*.

But ſince he *expreſſly ſaies* (and I think for the moſt part truly) that

Defence
p. 30.

the three Persons or Subsistences, in the ever blessed Trinity are three real, substantial Subsistences, each of which hath entirely, all the Perfections of the Divine Nature, Divine Wisdom, Power, and Goodness; and therefore each of them is eternal, Infinite mind, as distinct from each other as any other three Persons; and this he believes, the Dean will no more recant, than he will renounce a Trinity; for all the wit of man, can not find a medium, between a substantial Trinity, and a Trinity of names, or a Trinity of meer modes, Respects and Relations in the same single essence, which is no Trinity at all. As also he had said much to the same purpose before, that to talk of three Subsistences in the abstract, without three that subsist, or of one single nature which hath three Subsistences, when it's impossible that in singularity there can be more than one Subsistence, &c. I believe he will find no small difficulty to name what it is, that with the peculiar distinct manner of subsistence makes a person; not the very same common nature,

ture, for the Persons can not be distinguished from each other by *that which is common to them all*. Therefore the Divine Nature which is common to the three, must *according to him* comprehend *three single natures*, and not be *absolutely simple*. Hither must be his resort at last, after all his earnest disputation against it. And these *he* will have to be parts, which because they are undivided, impartible, inseparable, everlastingly and necessarily united. I do reckon the Enquirer did *with very sufficient reason*, and *with just decency* (and doth still continue very peremptorily to) deny.

And whereas he contends that the *whole Divine nature* is entirely in each subsistence, (as he does again and again) I think the term *whole*, improper, where there are no *proper parts*. And I doubt not, when he gives place to cooler thoughts, he will see cause to qualify that assertion. For if he strictly mean *that every thing that belongs to the Godhead*
is

is in each Person; I see not how he will fetch himself from the Socinian consequence, that then each Person must have a Trinity subsisting in it, and be *Father, Son, and H. Ghost*. For I doubt not he will acknowledge that the *entire Divinity* includes in it the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*. And therefore he must be beholden to an *inadequate notion* in this very case, when all is done, how much soever he hath contended against it. I do however think it safe and free from any other difficulty, than we unavoidably have, in conceiving *Infinities*. To say that all perfection is in each *subsistent* (which I like better than *subsistence*, as more expressive of the *concrete*) as far as their *natural, necessary, eternal order, towards one another*, as the *first* is the *fountain or radix*, the *second* from that, and the *third* from both, can possibly admit. All must be originally in the *Father*, with whom, the *other two* have that intimate, vital, eternal union, that what is in him
the

the other communicate therein, in as full perfection as is inconceivable, and more than it is possible for us, or for any finite mind to conceive. Therefore since that *difference* which only proceeds from that *natural, eternal order*, is conjecturable only, but is really unknown, unrevealed and inscrutable; it is better, herein, to confess the imperfection of that knowledge which we have, than to boast that which we have not, or aspire to that which we cannot have.

FINIS.

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